

While slightly elevated COHb levels have no effect on healthy individuals, in individuals with diseased hearts it could impair their ability to function. This has been demonstrated by a decrease in exercise time prior to onset of angina pectoris or claudication in patients who had been exposed to CO.

In experimental work on animals it appears that exposure to CO causes a greater uptake of cholesterol in the aorta. It appears that CO might be a causal factor in atherosclerosis based on these studies.

A fuller discussion on the smoker and CO from cigarettes will be found in Dr. Wakeham's report, "Environmental CO from Cigaret Smoking."

VI. SUMMARY

Cigarette smoking is a source of CO for the smoker and causes an increased level of COHb. The amount of CO absorbed by nonsmokers in presence of smokers is still an open scientific question but legislation is being passed to protect the nonsmoker.

While there is evidence that high levels of CO can impair the functional capacities of selected individuals, how will the public respond to publicized CO numbers? The following information answers that question.